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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 002030

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2013

TAGS: [AEMR](#) [AMGT](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [CVIS](#) [EFIN](#) [ETRD](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: TFIZ01: AMMAN SITREP 26 (4/03 2000 LOCAL)

Classified By: PolCouns Douglas Silliman for reasons 1.5 (B)(D).

General Overview

11. (SBU) The Embassy will be closed on April 4 and 5, for the Jordanian weekend. It will open for regular business on Sunday, April 7. The movement of American staff remains restricted.

Consular Issues

12. (U) No new issues.

GOJ Actions/Statements

13. (C) No new issues except as reported under Press heading.

Security

14. (U) No new issues.

Economic and Trade Developments

15. (sbu) The Sheikh Hussein Bridge in northern Jordan is open, but Jordanian exporters report that drastic work slowdowns by Israeli customs officials have significantly reduced traffic across the bridge. According to Jordanian bridge authorities, a total of 19 trucks crossed Sheikh Hussein April 2 in both directions, versus a normal volume of approximately 120 per day. Jordan hopes to clear 45 both ways on April 3, but notes their success will depend largely on strike activity by Israeli customs. We are coordinating with Embassy Tel Aviv to get a better idea of how long this situation, an unwelcome blow to QIZ confidence even if unrelated to the Iraq conflict, will persist.

Refugee/Humanitarian Issues

16. (C) The Jordan-Iraq border remains open. IOM reports that 6 additional TCNs arrived late on April 2 and another 15 arrived today, April 3. Today's arrivals included a group of 11 Egyptians who will be repatriated this evening. Four Palestinians (with Iraqi travel documents) also were admitted to the transit camp at Ruweished but another 8 Palestinians currently are being held in no man's land at the border. Still no sign of Iraqi refugees or asylum seekers.

17. (C) UNHCR reports that a "handful" of Iraqi citizens -- primarily businessmen -- cross into Jordan every day. These Iraqis have not requested asylum or UNHCR assistance.

Press

18. (U) Following the Ambassador's meeting with the Prime Minister today (which the local press characterized as a "summons"), Ambassador Gnehm delivered remarks to the Jordanian press regarding the meeting. He said that the PM had conveyed to him the strong views of the GOJ regarding the effect of the continued fighting on the civilian population of Iraq, and that he pledged to the PM that he would convey those views to Washington. He added that the U.S. Government was similarly concerned about the fate of the civilians in Iraq and that the coalition was doing everything possible to minimize the effect of the fighting on civilians. In response to a question about the possibility of a diplomatic solution to the conflict, the Ambassador said that a number of solutions had been sought to this question over the past 12 years, and that given the failure of all previous efforts, the coalition was forced to resort to military force. Action was ongoing and the U.S. will pursue our objectives to disarm

the regime and remove the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein and his henchmen. The Ambassador noted that U.S.-Jordan relations remain strong on a variety of levels, despite occasional disagreements on specific issues, and that the U.S. and Jordanian governments shared a common goal that the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people must be met.

GNEHM